

REPORT

OF THE

Auxiliary Bible Society

OF

Lancaster County, Pennsylvania,

PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL MEETING,

APRIL 29, 1823.

WITH THE SPEECHES

OF THE

[HON. CHARLES SMITH, L. L. D.

AND THE

REV. JOSEPH BARR.

LANCASTER, (PA.)

PRINTED BY MARY DICKSON,

NORTH QUEEN STREET.

1823.

THE ninth annual meeting of the Auxiliary Bible Society of Lancaster County, Pa. was held in the Presbyterian Church, in the city of Lancaster, on Tuesday evening, April 29th, 1823.

The meeting was opened with singing the 119th Psalm, 8th part, of Watts, reading the 35th chapter of Isaiah, and prayer, by the Rev. William Augustus Muhlenberg.

The Report of the Board of Directors was next read by the Rev. William Ashmead.

On motion of the Hon. Charles Smith, L. L. D. seconded by the Rev. Joseph Barr, it was resolved, that the Report be published. In support of this resolution, speeches were delivered by the mover and seconder.

On motion of William Kirkpatrick, Esq. seconded by George Bryan, Esq. it was resolved, that the Hon. Charles Smith, L. L. D. and the Rev. Joseph Barr, be requested to furnish the Directors with copies of their speeches for publication.

The meeting was then concluded with prayer by the Rev. Joseph Clarkson, President.

REPORT.

THE Board of Directors of the Auxiliary Bible Society of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, present to their constituents the following Report:

This society was instituted in the year 1815. A meeting was convened, by a notice published in the English and German newspapers, in the Court-house, in the city of Lancaster, on the 8th day of February, 1815. *John Hubley, Esq.* was chosen Chairman, and the Rev. *Joseph Clarkson*, Secretary. In pursuance of the object for which the meeting was called, a Constitution was proposed and adopted, by which a Bible Society was organized, auxiliary to the Bible Society of Philadelphia. The first annual meeting of the Society was held in the month of May following, when the Rev. Dr. HENRY MUHLENBERG, was elected *President*, and the Rev. WILLIAM KERR, and the Rev. JOSEPH CLARKSON, *Vice Presidents*.

It appears, from the Report of William Kirkpatrick, Esq. Treasurer, presented at the annual meeting on the 5th of May, 1818, that the amount of monies received within the space of somewhat more than three years, was \$444 75. During the same period, there were distributed 261 English Bibles, 74 English Testaments, and 48 German Testaments. During the following year, there was received the sum of \$30, and distributed 62 English Bibles, 12 German Bibles, 24 English Testaments, and 14 German Testaments. During the year ending May, 1820, there was received the sum of \$73 20, and distributed 53 English Bibles, 20 German Bibles, 184 English Testaments, and 2 German Testaments. During the year ending May, 1821, there was

received the sum of \$50 21, and distributed 18 English Bibles, 12 German Bibles, 139 English Testaments, and 19 German Testaments. During the year ending May, 1822, there was received the sum of \$36 60, and distributed 10 English Bibles, 5 German Bibles, 42 English Testaments, and 1 German Testament. From this statement it appears; that from the institution of the Society in the year 1815, till the year 1822, there was received into the treasury the sum of \$634 76; and that, during the same period, there were distributed 404 English Bibles, 49 German Bibles, 463 English Testaments, and 84 German Testaments.

With the year 1822, commences a new era in the history of the Lancaster County Auxiliary Bible Society. When this Society was instituted, the American Bible Society was not yet in existence. It was, therefore, natural and proper, that a connection should be formed with the Bible Society of Philadelphia. It was not less natural and proper, that this connection should remain undissolved, until time should sufficiently test the permanency and efficiency of the National Society. After an experiment of nearly seven years, it was believed that no rational doubt could exist, with respect to the success of that great institution. It was accordingly deemed expedient, by the Board of Directors, to convene a special meeting of this Society, for the purpose of taking into consideration the propriety of dissolving the connection which had subsisted with the Bible Society of Philadelphia, and becoming auxiliary to the American Bible Society. Notice of the contemplated change was published in the newspapers, for two months prior to the day of the meeting. The Society having met, agreeably to such notice, on the 5th of November, 1822, it was unanimously resolved, after mature deliberation, that "this Society should become auxiliary to the American Bible Society."

The reasons for the change which has thus taken place, may be briefly stated.

In the first place, it was conceived, that a National Bible Society is an institution, which, on account of its decided superiority over independent local societies, is eminently entitled to the approbation and patronage of all, who are interested in the spirit-

ual welfare of man. The following judicious remarks, in relation to this subject, are extracted from the address of the Convention, by which the American Bible Society was established in the year 1816. "Concentrated action is powerful action. The same powers, when applied by a common direction, will produce results impossible to their divided and partial exercise. A national object unites national feeling and concurrence. Unity of a great system combines energy of effect with economy of means. Accumulated intelligence interests and animates the public mind. And the Catholic efforts of a country thus harmonized, give her a place in the moral convention of the world; and enable her to act directly upon the universal plans of happiness, which are now pervading the nations."

In the next place, it was believed to be unequivocally the interest of this Society to become auxiliary to the American Bible Society, inasmuch as Bibles and Testaments could be procured, on this condition, from the Depository of the national institution, of a quality superior to that of the Bibles and Testaments which are furnished by the Bible Society of Philadelphia, and upon terms more advantageous than those, on which books had been obtained from the latter Society. A comparison of the books which have been published by the two Societies, and also of the prices at which those books are offered to their respective auxiliaries, will abundantly confirm the truth of this remark.

Such are the reasons which have induced this Society to dissolve the connection, which subsisted between it and the Bible Society of Philadelphia, and to declare itself an auxiliary of the American Bible Society.

The change to which your Directors have now adverted, was followed by the substitution of a new Constitution in the place of the old one. The new Constitution differs but in a few particulars, (and those unessential) from the "Form of a Constitution," which has been recommended by the National Society, to the adoption of all its auxiliaries. Uniformity in this respect, so far as may be practicable, is certainly desirable.

A copy of the new Constitution, authenticated by the Secretary, together with the names and residences of the other officers, having been transmitted to the Secretary of the American Bible

Society for Domestic correspondence, the Lancaster County Bible Society has been formally recognized as an auxiliary of the National Society.

The new Constitution differs in one important particular, from the old. According to the latter, every member was required to pay at least three dollars at the time of subscribing, and one dollar annually afterwards. But by the present Constitution, the condition of membership is simply an annual subscription of one dollar. It is believed that this alteration will prove beneficial to the funds of the Society, by increasing the number of its members.

It is provided, in the seventh article of the Constitution, that "the Board shall divide the sphere of this Society into districts, "and appoint two or more members for each district, who may "associate with themselves any subscribers, for the purpose of "soliciting subscriptions and donations from the inhabitants "thereof, and collecting the money, who shall pay it to the "Treasurer of the Society at the stated meetings of the Board." In order to carry this provision into effect, a committee was appointed to ascertain and report the names of individuals throughout the county, whom it would be proper to designate as committees to solicit subscriptions and donations. To each of these individuals a circular letter was addressed, signed by a committee of the Board, in which the object of the Society was stated, and its claims upon the benevolence of the public concisely urged. It is not yet known what good results may ultimately flow from this measure. In one instance at least, the Board have the satisfaction to say, that it has not been in vain. William Calhoun, Esq. late of Dromore township, to whom one of the circulars was addressed, died some months since, leaving to the Society a legacy of one hundred dollars. This benefaction your Directors record with mingled emotions of gratitude and pleasure. They would further mention, that the money thus bequeathed, has been already paid to the Treasurer.

The sum of seventy-five dollars was remitted, in December last, to the Treasurer of the American Bible Society; in return for which, the following books have been received: 40 English Bibles, 10 German Bibles, and 72 English Testaments.

There have been distributed and sold, during the past year, 34 English Bibles, 39 English Testaments, and 5 German Bibles. The books remaining on hand, are, 62 English Bibles, 73 English Testaments, and 30 German Bibles.

The receipts of the Society, during the past year, have amounted to \$178 04. In this sum, the subscriptions which have been paid on the present day, are not included. The expenditures during the past year, have amounted to \$94 07. The balance now in the hands of the Treasurer is \$114 60.

From the preceding statements, it is apparent, that from the institution of this Society, in 1815, till the present time, a space of somewhat more than eight years, there has been received the sum of \$812 80; and that, during the same period, there have been sold and distributed 492 English and German Bibles, and 619 English and German Testaments.

Your Directors, in reviewing the operations of this Society, have been consoled with the belief, that some good has been done. But when it is recollected, that the county of Lancaster contains a population of about sixty-nine thousand, every pious mind must experience deep regret, that such good has been so comparatively limited. The spiritual exigencies of this district are great, and it is surely time, that efficient means should be adopted for the relief of those exigencies. What enterprize can be more acceptable to God, and more salutary to man, than that of administering to the wants of those who are famishing for the bread of life!

In concluding, your Directors would express the high degree of satisfaction which they derive from the reflection, that this Society is now one of the numerous auxiliaries of the American Bible Society. That noble institution, a monument to the piety and the prayers of those by whom it was established, is "in the full tide of successful experiment." Concentrating the feelings, the exertions, and the hopes of the religious community, it promises to prove, eventually, an extensive and inestimable blessing, not only to the western continent, but to the whole world.

Inhabitants of Lancaster County, we call upon you, as Christians and philanthropists, to co-operate with us in the sublime

work of diffusing the Word of God. Remember that *they that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever.* You can never have an opportunity of uniting in any charity more glorious and more Godlike, than that of putting into the hands of your fellow-beings, a book by which life and immortality have been brought to light; a book, which forms the only vista that heaven has opened between the present state of existence, and that upon which the spirit enters after death; a book,

“Which not the whole creation could produce,
Which not the conflagration shall destroy,
In nature’s ruins not one letter lost.”

ADDRESS

OF THE

Hon. Charles Smith, L. L. D.

After the reading of the REPORT, the Hon. CHARLES SMITH, President Judge of the District Court, moved that the same be printed, and addressed the Chair as follows:

MR. PRESIDENT—

I have offered this resolution in the certain expectation, that when the report we have just heard comes to be printed and circulated, it will prove to be extensively useful. I beg leave to subjoin to the motion a few remarks.

Several years have elapsed since the Bible Society was instituted at this place. It promised, at the time, to become interesting and beneficial; its object, as auxiliary to the more extensive Society at Philadelphia, was laudable, and greatly important. To say it was merely praise-worthy, would not give to it the high standing to which it is entitled. It was a solemn duty, which, as Christians, anxious for the advancement of religious knowledge, and the wide spreading of the blessed Gospel, we were bound to perform; and which, an awful and commanding sense of its vast utility, forbids us for one moment to neglect. Why then, has it been so neglected? Whence the luke-warmness, or rather, the cold indifference, to the benevolent and charitable design? Why have our annual meetings been forgotten, or so thinly attended? Why have our contributions so greatly diminished? as if the Society were commenced and instituted merely as a novelty, which, by the lapse of time, has lost its charms, and we have become weary in doing good; when a moment's reflection must inform us, that its transcendent objects can never cease, but must go with the current of time, for the benefit of future

generations. From the nature of man, there will always be those who will require the aid of the pious and the good. The wants of the human family will always require the persevering exercise of the sublime and endearing virtue of Charity. It is glorious to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry—by so doing, you afford comfort to the suffering and afflicted poor, as it regards the necessities of the body; but is it not an equally exalted exercise of this heavenly virtue, to feed the imperishable soul, that it shall not languish for want of spiritual food? Yet from the report which you have even now heard, instead of the Society increasing day after day, and year after year, in number, in usefulness and vigor, you have a melancholy account of diminished funds, and cold indifference. Many of our excellent members have left this transitory scene; but let us remember the fame of their deeds, and continue to be animated by their bright example.

Our excellent clergy are zealous; and unceasingly active in promoting the usefulness of the Bible Society, and we have reason to know the sincerity and value of their motives and exertions—but let us not suffer those exertions to fail for want of our aid. They can do little without our assistance—and if we draw back, and fail to co-operate, we may talk in vain of the religion of the heart, we shall boast in vain of the revival of religion, and a regenerated spirit, if it be not apparent in our works. True religion cannot exist in a heart coiled up within itself, and which does not expand with good will to men. By our fruits shall we be known—but if we be like the barren fig tree, we shall be rooted up. Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not Charity, I am as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. Though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not Charity, I am nothing.

We have reason to believe that secret Charity is extensively beneficial in this city, especially among the Ladies, and it will meet with its reward. Like the quality of Mercy, Charity is twice blessed—it blesses him that gives, and him that receives. But independently of the gracious exercise of this most exalted virtue of the heart, there are occasions when public contributions are indispensably requisite; when the heart, free to give, must be seen in the hand, in order to accomplish objects which cannot otherwise be attained, and which individual exertion

could never reach. We are not uninformed of the wonderful efforts now making in the Christian world, to spread the Gospel among the heathen. Wealth is combined with genius, learning, and science, to translate the Bible into all tongues and languages, for the benefit of millions who have not heard the glad tidings of salvation. Let us join, with heart and hand, in the glorious cause. When our blessed Saviour was closing his heavenly mission, and had opened the way of salvation to man, he commanded his Disciples to go and teach all nations. Under the influence of this divine command, we find many great, good, and pious men, leaving the comfort of their homes, giving up the world and all its pleasures, travelling into remote regions throughout the earth; laboring in earnest to extend their master's dominion, at the risk of life; who love God more than pleasure. Yet the laborers are few. The missionary societies are but a part, though a very important part, of our duty. The Sunday school, and Bible societies, are of infinite consequence, in accomplishing the great work. We also have a wilderness to settle, which is yet to rejoice and blossom as the rose; and at this moment, there are thousands who have not the benefit of religious information and instruction—being remote from Christian churches. Very many among ourselves, have not the means of procuring Bibles; but the poor must be taught, they have an equal interest in the Redeemer's love. What more delightful task, then, can there be, than to send the inspired volume among them, and to illuminate the hut of cheerless poverty, with the bright rays of immortal truth, and the glad tidings of salvation. If we cannot, at present, send faithful instructors among them, let us at least endeavor to furnish them with some means of grace, and place in their hands the illuminated page that shall teach them the things that belong to eternal life. We know that the kingdom of the MESSIAS must come. But before that blessed period can arrive, we know that the heathen must be brought in for an inheritance, and all nations shall acknowledge the Lord. Let us endeavor to hasten that happy period, although we may not live to behold it. We know that every tittle of the prophecies of the Old and New Testament shall be fulfilled. The means of their fulfilment are with the Almighty. It is true, at his bare command, in the twinkling of an eye, all could be accomplished—but he has formed us the instruments of

his will and his power, and as our Saviour commanded his Disciples, who were men, to go and teach all nations, so we are assuredly to know, that we are not to expect any immediate, visible miracle, but that the mighty work is to be accomplished by human means, under the direction, and with the spirit of God. Let us humbly hope, that we may be some of the instruments, in the hands of our Creator, to assist in the accomplishment of this most blessed work.

Perhaps on the bed of sickness, or in the hour of death, we may say to ourselves, amidst our silent and solemn prayers—How have I labored in my master's vineyard? What have I done to advance my father's kingdom?—blessed may be the answer that we shall be able to give to our own hearts!

Depend upon it, the advantages to be derived from Bible societies, are not the mere creatures of the imagination. They are of solid benefit; and let us rejoice if we shall be able to contribute to their prosperity. But little is required from us; become members and contribute our mite, and discharge it faithfully and punctually. The annual payment is but small; it requires no sacrifice of our time, we can spare it from some unneedful luxury, from some fancied enjoyment, which, when attained, is but unreal pleasure, and never to be put in competition with the delight of aiding to improve the morals and to mend the heart—we can spare it from the feast and the frolic, from the theatre and the dance; we will then put it out to usury, and make our talent to be ten talents—and I feel assured we shall derive more pleasure from it, more heart-felt satisfaction, than can ever be derived from the whole giddy round of dissipated joys.

ADDRESS

OF THE

Rev. Joseph Barr.

After Judge Smith had concluded his observations, the Rev. JOSEPH BARR addressed the chair as follows:

MR. PRESIDENT.—

I cheerfully second the motion that has been made, and think with Judge Smith, that printing the report which has just been read, will greatly promote the interests of this Institution. And here, sir, allow me to make a few observations on the object of our present meeting.

It is our happiness to live in an auspicious period of the Church of Christ. Ours, sir, is an age of unparalleled Christian exertion—exertion steadily advancing. Few could have believed, twenty years since, that we should have seen in operation, the splendid plans of Christian benevolence which mark our age. I need not detain you to mention, that Bible Societies, which are the glory of the present day, and which are now numerous in active operation, both in Europe and America, were then unknown. And who can tell what may be doing in this cause in twenty years hence? May we not hope, that effective Christian benevolence and exertion will be increased twenty, or fifty, or an hundred fold? Have we not sufficient grounds on which to found this hope? Independently of its being the cause of God, which must prosper—which will succeed, the fact, that benevolent institutions—that Bible societies, Missionary, Education, Tract, and Sunday School societies, are springing up every where through our land, and in places too, where but a short time since, few were to be found bold enough to meet that torrent of opposition and abuse which infidels would have poured

upon the open advocate—the professed friend, of an institution such as this, whose anniversary we are assembled to celebrate; affords to my mind, no inconsiderable ground for this hope. The day of open opposition to Bible and other religious institutions, has, I thank God, gone by. Few are to be found possessed of hardihood enough to appear in the ranks of the open opponents of a cause which numbers as its friends, the wisest and best men throughout Christendom—men, too, of every different religious sect. The infidel prediction, that, in past days, was so frequently, so vauntingly, and so confidently uttered, that it would be impossible for the different religious sects to act in union sufficiently long to give efficacy to their plans for the advancement of their common cause; that discord and division—that party strife—a sectarian spirit—would speedily paralyze their efforts; the Bible cause has proved to be false. Still, however, there are many secret opposers of this most benevolent work—this sublimest of charities—the furnishing the bread of life to the famishing millions of our race. But I thank God, even this secret opposition, is fast giving way. I congratulate you, sir, and I congratulate myself, on the report which has been read to-night, and the observations which have been made, in favor of the Bible cause, made too by an individual, occupying an elevated and honorable station in our county. Let us hope, sir, that this cause, which has hitherto languished so much in this county, is about to receive somewhat of that attention of which it is so immensely deserving—and to excite somewhat of that interest which it should cause to be felt, among all classes of our citizens. It is at once matter of grief and humiliation, that so little has been done, heretofore, in the extensive, rich, and populous county of Lancaster—that she is so far behind many other less populous and less wealthy counties, in this state, in the race of Christian benevolence. But let us hope that she is about to arouse from her apathy, and “come to the help of the Lord against the mighty,” that the period has arrived, when she is about to contribute cheerfully, her quota of the means which are necessary for carrying into effect the benevolent plans of the present day. Let us hope that the period has arrived, when her inhabitants will learn to set a due value upon the Bible themselves, and then they will cheerfully, as they are able efficiently, aid in sending it to those who are destitute of this precious volume.

Lamentably, sir, vast multitudes of our race, have never heard of the Bible. Vastly the greater proportion of the human family are strangers to the existence of that only book, which brings life and immortality to light—and of consequence are strangers to the plan of salvation. Yes, the multitude, emphatically the multitude of the children of men, (for if the inhabitants of our globe were divided into thirteen parts, not more than three, or at most four, of those parts, are Christians, nominally,) are Mahomedans, the deluded followers of a wicked impostor; or Pagans, the worshippers of dumb idols. They truly dwell in the region of the shadow of death. The sun of righteousness, which has arisen for the enlightening of the world, has never dawned upon them. The path which leads to Heaven, is, to them, covered with clouds and darkness—a darkness, worse than Egyptian—yes, the darkness of everlasting death, rests upon their path. I need not stay to enumerate to you the abominable rites, the shocking impieties they practice, in order to propitiate, as they suppose, their idol gods. I need not point you to their children, in the most helpless and endearing period of life, thrust into the bosom of a blazing idol, by the very hands that should have been the last to harm them—the first upraised in their defence. I need not point you to the multitude who annually commit suicide, the most cruel suicide, under the mistaken belief (such is their ignorance of the true God, and the worship he requires) that their self-murder will be acceptable to their gods. But time would fail me, did I attempt only to mention, the almost countless atrocities, and horrid cruelties, that are every where practised, throughout the heathen world, under the name of religion, and all this because they are strangers to the Bible.

Hence, sir, arises one need of Bible societies—of Associations of benevolent individuals, in the Christian world, to send this book, which gives to temporal blessings their highest enjoyment, without which, life loses all that renders it truly valuable, to those who are destitute of it. In the very nature of things, this is the only way in which they ever can become acquainted with the Bible. Being strangers to its existence, 'tis absurd to suppose they will ever exert themselves to obtain it. And even were they acquainted with its existence, as it teaches a religion that is directly subversive of their's and the religion of their fathers, and as they are strangers to its value, it is not to be sup-

posed they will ever send to Christendom to purchase it. How then, I would ask those who are unfriendly to the Bible and Missionary cause, and I much regret that I am warranted in saying, that there are, among the professed friends of Jesus Christ, among those who profess to believe the Bible to be the word of the living God, and the rule of faith and practice, the only sure and sufficient guide to happiness and heaven—many who are so far unfriendly to this cause that they will contribute nothing towards sending the Bible to the perishing heathen: how then, I would ask such, are they ever to become possessed of this Book? Agreeably to their own professions, it is a matter of the last importance that they be acquainted with its contents, and the method of salvation it reveals. But in what other mode can they ever become acquainted with what it so highly concerns them to know? Is it not apparent, that, if ever they are Christians, it must be through the instrumentality of Christian exertion, and Christian benevolence—it must be by the scriptures of truth being sent to them, and being put into their hands? And in no other way can this be done, but by means of the Missionary of the cross. I would, sir, that our time would allow us to speak of the falsehoods that are frequently originated and circulated by the enemies of the Missionary cause, and which are too often credited by those who are not its enemies. But it will allow us only just to notice, that the objection that is so frequently made, and so confidently relied on, and which, in truth, is so injurious to the cause, viz:—that the money collected for this purpose, is misapplied—that it is squandered by the Agents and Missionaries, in extravagance;—for the indulgence of their own ease and indolence, instead of being used for the benefit of the heathen, is as weak as it is false and wicked. And if persons who are ready to believe that this is the case—who are ready to think there must be some foundation for it, or it would not be so frequently repeated; if they will select any one from the several Missionary stations in our land, and will attend to its operations for one year; to its necessary expenditures, and the amount of money applied to its support, and to the labors, distresses, and bereavements to which the Missionaries, females as well as the males, are subject, (and they can readily obtain satisfactory information on all these subjects) convinced I am, that they will be fully satisfied, and see that the representation is at once false and wicked.

But, to return from this digression, the state of the heathen world is not the only necessity that exists for Bible Societies. Not only is vastly the great part of the world heathen, but in Christian lands, in our own land, where gospel blessings are enjoyed in an unparalleled degree, there are astonishing numbers destitute of this invaluable gift of God to man. There are large sections of our country in which there is scarce a Bible to be found. And there are vast numbers all through our land, destitute of it, where you would little expect such a thing. Hundreds and thousands, living in this gospel land, and yet are scarcely more instructed in the religion of the Bible than the heathen, and for this obvious reason, that they have no Bibles.

Nor are these less objects of Christian benevolence than pagans. The fact, that they make no exertions—evidence no desire to procure a Bible, when all, even the poorest inhabitant of our highly favored land, might possess one, speaks volumes, as to their condition; tells us they are perishing in sin—led captive by Satan, the god of this world, who labors incessantly at the fatal work of the sinner's undoing; and that, if we would save them from ruin, we must carry the Bible to their doors, and thrust it into their houses.

Away with that worldly principle and policy which would say to us—if they will not help themselves, if they do not feel sufficiently interested in their own happiness to desire to know what they must do to be saved, they have no claims on us—we are under no obligations to interest ourselves in their behalf. Let such a sentiment never be so much as named amongst Christians. Let that man blush, who has, for a moment, indulged the thought. What! no claims on our benevolence? Has that man no claims on us who is rushing on certain ruin? Will we make no exertions to save him because he is regardless of safety? What! we under no obligations to save a fellow creature from suffering, forever, inconceivable miseries—the miseries of hell? Is it possible that a Christian can, for one moment, entertain such an idea? Can it have originated—have existence in his breast?

Notwithstanding, sir, such unhappy creatures are looked upon with an indifference and neglect which has in it the coldness of death itself, by the money-loving, time-serving professor, yet they have claims on us—we are under obligations to endeavor to

bless and to save them—to contribute our mite to aid in putting the Bible into the hands of those who are destitute of it, whether they be nominal Christians, or heathen.

The simple fact that this kindness has been shewn to us, if not in our own persons, in those of our forefathers, and through them to us, imposes it on us as a solemn and important duty. We are too prone to forget, that, had it not been for the Christian benevolence of some Apostle, or Missionary, we, and all our forefathers, had been heathen. Instead of erecting temples for the worship of Israel's and the Christian's God, we had erected them to a Jupiter, a Bacchus, a Venus, or a Jugernaut. Instead of offering upon these altars the rational sacrifices of prayer and praise, we had perhaps, met to offer our children to a bloody, cruel idol. Instead of having assembled to encourage each others hearts, and strengthen each others hands, in the sublime work of circulating the Scriptures, and through them life and blessedness, among our fellow creatures, we had perhaps met to originate plans, and adopt measures, to rivet more closely upon our race, the fetters of idolatry and wretchedness. Instead of entertaining that delightful hope of heaven and happiness, which we are permitted to indulge—instead of those enrapturing prospects which lie before us, all had been dark and uncertain, and distressful, beyond the solitary grave.

And do the blessings, of which we have been made partakers by the benevolence of others, lay on us no claims—impose on us no obligations, to do good to others, as we have opportunity and ability? Does the money that was expended—the labor that was undergone to put us in possession of the Gospel—to bless us with happiness here and hereafter, lay us under no obligations to contribute, as God has prospered us, in doing the same for others?

There are many persons to be found, persons called Christians, and who call themselves Christians, who are ready to contribute to the relief of the temporal wants of their fellow creatures, who will contribute nothing to the supply of their spiritual necessities; many who will make laudable exertions to advance their present comfort, who will do nothing to secure to them eternal happiness. Can such set a due value upon the Bible? Do they duly appreciate the deathless soul? No, sir : 'tis impossible. Did

they feel the force of the interrogatory of the Saviour—"What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" they would feel, that, whilst to relieve their temporal distresses is important and laudable, to promote their future and eternal well-being, is vastly more important, infinitely more laudable. Though even in a temporal point of view, the Bible is of the last importance to man.

Point me to the country in which woman is not treated as a slave, where she holds that rank, designed for her by her Maker, and I will point you to a land of Bibles. Shew me the nation that enjoys rational liberty, even in a moderate degree, the rights and property of whose citizens are secured by a well regulated government, and I will show you a people blest with the Bible.

But its eternal blessings are vastly more important to man, whose existence is not limited by the bounds of time, but runs parallel with eternity. It discovers, to the poor, bewildered, perishing sinner, the path to Paradise and God. It affords us prospects and promises which death cannot affect, and which are lasting as the deathless soul. The Bible, and the Bible alone, reveals to us the will of God, concerning the salvation of his rebel creature, man—it, alone, teaches us how we may recover the favor of our offended God, and secure the blessedness of heaven, which we have forfeited by sin. 'Tis in vain that we resort for direction on this subject, to the writings of the philosophers of Greece and Rome. On this subject, all their instructions are essentially defective. They taught nothing that could satisfy the conscience, burdened with a sense of guilt, and trembling under a just apprehension of the wrath of God. No, sir, this is a subject, on which no instructions are sufficient, but his who came from God. The Bible is here the only infallible teacher, and it does teach us what we must do to be saved, how we may attain that "fullness of joy," and those "eternal pleasures which remain at the right hand of God forevermore."

Would we then, be instrumental in blessing mankind with that which alone can render life valuable, in smoothing for them the road to death, in lighting its dark valley, and above all, in opening to them the gates of immortality, and rendering them unspeakably happy through eternity? Let us exert ourselves in the Bible cause. Let us arouse from that apathy which is still

too prevalent in the present day. - Let us contribute our mite. Who amongst us but can spare the small sum of one dollar, annually? Who can withhold his dollar, when so much is at stake; even the everlasting happiness or woe of thousands and millions of our race.

Nor let us be satisfied merely with contributing ourselves. Let us exert ourselves—use all our influence to induce others to unite with us in this noblest of Charities. Did all the good people in our county contribute one dollar a year to our now feeble institution, we would be capable of doing much for our fellow men—we would be able to add a large amount to the quantum of individual happiness.

Let none object and say that our funds would then be more than sufficient for the supply of the county. It is not the county, nor the state, alone, that this institution would wish to furnish with Bibles. No, sir, the Bible cause is the cause of human happiness. It spurns all local bounds. Its bounds are the universe. Wherever a child of Adam is found, is found the region of its sphere of operation. Had every family in our county and state, a Bible, much, very much, remains to be done. Yes, sir, the work would be hardly begun. Look to the extensive territory to the south and west of these United States, which is wholly unsupplied. Look to South America, to European Russia, to Africa, to the Islands of the Sea, as well as Asia, with its millions and hundreds of millions of inhabitants, and then we would ask the objector whether our funds can be too great? No, sir, did all the Christian world unite heart and hand, in this work, it would be a century, perhaps centuries, before a Bible would be furnished to each family of man. But when so few are found willing to engage in this work, what need for exertion. How active should we be! Always recollecting, that daily and hourly, hundreds, destitute of Bibles, are passing into eternity—to them an unknown eternity.

The Christian philosopher—the friend of Bibles and of man, should adopt the motto of one of the most successful conquerors of antiquity: he should consider nothing done whilst any thing remains to do—whilst a family on earth remains without a Bible, he should see abundant reason for fresh, for increased exertion. May we thus feel and thus act, and we will be a blessing to our generation, and generations yet unborn shall call us blessed.

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

AUXILIARY BIBLE SOCIETY

OF LANCASTER COUNTY.

ARTICLE I.

THE subscribers, cordially approving of the object and constitution of the American Bible Society, do agree to form a society, to be called the Auxiliary Bible Society of Lancaster county, in the state of Pennsylvania, whose sole object shall be to co-operate with that National Institution, in encouraging a wider circulation of the holy scriptures.

ARTICLE II.

Conformably to the principles of the parent institution, the Bibles and Testaments, to be circulated by this society, shall be without note or comment, and those in the English language shall be of the version now in common use.

ARTICLE III.

All persons subscribing the sum of one dollar, or upwards, annually, to become due at the annual meeting, shall be members of the society; or the sum of ten dollars, or upwards, at one time, shall be members for life.

ARTICLE IV.

The business of the society shall be conducted by a board of directors, consisting of a president, one or more vice-presidents, a treasurer, a secretary, and 24 other members; 5 of whom shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE V.

Every minister of the gospel, who is a member of the society, shall be entitled to attend and vote at the meetings of the board of directors.

ARTICLE VI.

The board shall meet quarterly, or oftener, if necessary, on some day to be fixed by themselves; and shall have power to call special meetings of the society, and to fill vacancies occurring in their own body during the year.

ARTICLE VII.

The board shall divide the sphere of this society into districts, and appoint two or more of their members for each district, who may associate with themselves any subscribers, for the purpose of soliciting subscriptions and donations from the inhabitants thereof, and collecting the money; and who shall pay it to the treasurer of the society, at the stated meetings of the board.

ARTICLE VIII.

The treasurer shall take charge of the money collected, till it is disposed of by order of the board; and his accounts shall be examined by a committee appointed by the society, which committee shall report to the society at its subsequent annual meeting.

ARTICLE IX.

The secretary shall conduct the correspondence, unless otherwise ordered by the board, and record the proceedings of the board and of the society.

ARTICLE X.

The surplus revenue of this society, after deducting the incidental expenses, and supplying the wants of the scriptures in the sphere of the society, shall be transmitted, annually, to the treasurer of the American Bible Society.

ARTICLE XI.

There shall be a general meeting of the members of the society on the last Tuesday of April; when the accounts shall be

presented as audited, the proceedings of the past year shall be reported, a new board of directors be chosen, and the other business of the society transacted.

ARTICLE XII.

At the meetings of the society and of the board, the president shall preside; in his absence, a vice-president; and if all of them be absent, the oldest member of the board who is present.

ARTICLE XIII.

The members of the society shall be entitled to the privilege of purchasing, from the depository of this society, Bibles and Testaments at the cost prices.

ARTICLE XIV.

It shall be the duty of the board to inquire what families or individuals, residing within the sphere of this society, are in want of the scriptures, and to furnish them therewith at cost, reduced prices, or gratis, according to their circumstances.

ARTICLE XV.

For the still further promotion of the circulation of the scriptures, the formation of *Branch Societies* shall be encouraged, in such districts within the sphere of this auxiliary society as may not be sufficiently populous to form auxiliary societies of their own; such branch societies, and the individual members thereof, to be entitled to the same privileges from this auxiliary society, as it and its members enjoy from the parent institution.

ARTICLE XVI.

Such persons within the sphere of this society as may not find it convenient to become members thereof (or of any one of its branches) shall, upon forming themselves into *Bible Associations*, auxiliary to this society, be entitled to purchase at the depository of this society, under the direction of the board, copies of the scriptures at cost, for gratuitous distribution, or for sale at cost or reduced prices.

ARTICLE XVII.

All ministers of the gospel, within the sphere of this society, making collections in their respective congregations, in behalf

of this institution, shall be entitled, on remitting such collections to the treasurer of the society, to receive Bibles and Testaments to an amount not exceeding one-half of the said respective collections, estimated at cost, as shall be found to be needed by the destitute in the vicinity; such return of Bibles and Testaments to be claimed within one year from the remittance of the collection. It is recommended, in all practicable cases, to supply the destitute by sale rather than by gift.

ARTICLE XVIII.

A copy of this constitution, authenticated by the secretary, with the names and residences of the other officers, and also one or more copies of each annual report, shall be transmitted to the secretary of the American Bible Society for domestic correspondence.

ARTICLE XIX.

The present board of directors of this society shall continue in office until the next annual meeting.

ARTICLE XX.

This constitution may be altered, on the recommendation of the board of directors, at any general meeting of the society, with the concurrence of two-thirds of the members present.

OFFICERS
OF THE
LANCASTER COUNTY AUXILIARY
BIBLE SOCIETY.

PRESIDENT,
REV. JOSEPH CLARKSON.

VICE PRESIDENTS,
REV. STEPHEN BOYER,
REV. CHRISTIAN ENDRESS, D. D.

TREASURER,
WILLIAM KIRKPATRICK, Esq.

SECRETARY,
HENRY Y. SLAYMAKER, Esq.

DIRECTORS,

Adam Reigart, Esq.
James Hopkins, Esq.
Robert Coleman, Esq.
Hon. Charles Smith, L. L. D.
David Witmer, Esq.
Samuel Humes, Esq.
John Whiteside, Esq.
Hon. Walter Franklin,
Rev. Wm. A. Muhlenberg,
Rev. William Ashmead,
George Bryan, Esq.
Christian Haldeman, Esq.

Rev. Joseph Barr,
Rev. Orson Douglas,
William Jenkins, Esq.
John Yates, Esq.
Edward Davis, Esq.
Samuel Slaymaker, Esq.
Rev. N. W. Sample,
Rev. Francis A. Latta,
Alexander Boggs, Esq.
Hugh M'Cassel, Esq.
William P. Beatty, Esq.
R. D. Carson, Esq.

BRIEF VIEW
OF THE
AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY.

PRESIDENT,
HON. JOHN JAY, OF NEW YORK.

VICE PRESIDENTS,
Gen. *Matthew Clarkson*, of New York.
Hon. *Bushrod Washington*, Judge of the Supreme Court of
the United States.
Joseph Nourse, Esq. of the District of Columbia.
Hon. *Charles Cotesworth Pinckney*, South Carolina.
Hon. *John Cotton Smith*, Connecticut.
Hon. *Thomas Worthington*, Ohio.
John Bolton, Esq. Georgia.
Hon. *William Tilghman*, Chief Justice of Pennsylvania.
Hon. *Smith Thompson*, Sec'y of the Navy of the U. States.
Felix Grundy, Esq. of Tennessee.
His Excellency *Daniel D. Tompkins*, Vice President of U. S.
Hon. *Andrew Kirkpatrick*, Judge of the Supreme Court of
New Jersey.
Hon. *John Quincy Adams*, Secretary of State of the U. States.
Francis S. Key, Esq. District of Columbia.
His Excellency *De Witt Clinton*, Governor of New York.
Hon. *Charles Goldsborough*, of Maryland.
Richard Varick, Esq. of New York.
Hon. *William Phillips*, Lieut. Governor of Massachusetts.
Hon. *Duncan Cameron*, of North Carolina.
Hon. *David Lawrence Morrill*, of New Hampshire.

SECRETARIES,
Rev. *Jas. Milnor*, D. D. New York, for Foreign Corres-
pondence.
Rev. *Selah S. Woodhull*, New York, for Domestic Corres-
pondence.
Mr. *John Pintard*, New York, Recording Secretary.

TREASURER,
William W. Woolsey, Esq. New York.

AGENT AND ACCOUNTANT,
Mr. *John Nitchie*, New York.

PLAN OF THE SOCIETY.

The sole object of the American Bible Society is to encourage a wider circulation of the Holy Scriptures, without note or comment. The only copies in the English language, circulated by the society, are of the version in common use.

Three dollars annually, constitutes a member, and 30 dollars at one time, a member for life; 15 dollars annually, constitutes a director, and 150 dollars, a director for life. Any person who shall, by one additional payment, increase his original subscription to 150 dollars, is also a director for life.

The business of the society is conducted by a board of managers, consisting of 36 laymen, of whom 24 reside in the city of New York, or its vicinity, one-fourth part of whom go out of office at the expiration of each year, but are re-eligible. The managers appoint all officers of the society, call special meetings, and fill vacancies which occur, by death or otherwise, in their own board. They meet regularly on the first Thursday of each month, and oftener if necessary. The president, vice-presidents, treasurer, and secretaries are, *ex-officio*, members of the board of managers. Directors, and all ministers of the gospel, who are members of the society, have a right to attend and vote at all meetings of the board.

Societies whose sole object is to promote the circulation of the Holy Scriptures, without note or comment, and who agree to place their surplus revenue, after supplying their own districts with the Scriptures, at the disposal of the American Bible Society, are admitted as auxiliaries, on notifying to the Parent Institution their existence, and their compliance with these requisites.

The members of such auxiliary societies are entitled to vote in all meetings of the Parent Society; and the officers of such society are, *ex-officio*, directors of the American Bible Society.

Auxiliary societies, and members of the Parent Society and of its several auxiliaries, are entitled to purchase Bibles and Testaments at the society's prices, which are 5 per cent. below cost; other Bible societies are furnished with them at cost.

The annual meeting of the society is held, in the city of New York, on the 2d Thursday of May, in each year, when the managers are chosen, the accounts presented, and the proceedings of the foregoing year reported.

The board of managers meet at 4 o'clock in the afternoon of the day preceding the annual meeting, for the purpose of receiving the delegates from auxiliary societies.

No alteration can be made in the constitution, except by the society, at an annual meeting, on the recommendation of the board of managers.



THE Society was formed in the city of New York, in the year 1816, by delegates from a number of Bible Societies in different parts of the Union. Since the establishment of the Society it has issued from its depository upwards of 248,623 Bibles and Testaments. It has expended, in providing stereotype plates for the Bible or Testament, (of which they possess 12 sets,) in printing and circulating the Holy Scriptures, and for incidental expenses, upwards of \$250,000. The receipts of the last year were upwards of \$45,000. The present number of societies, auxiliary to the National Bible Society, is 300, some of which have also Branch Societies and Bible Associations auxiliary to them.

As the sole object of the society is to circulate the Scriptures without note or comment, and as its managers and members are composed of individuals of different religious denominations, it commends itself to the approbation, and claims the patronage, of all who embrace the Christian religion. By printing large editions of the Scriptures from stereotype plates, under the superintendence of competent persons, who devote to the business their whole time, the price of Bibles and Testaments is much reduced, and their correctness, durability, and beauty, greatly promoted.

It is the design of the Society to extend its exertions not only to the destitute of the United States, but to those who live on our borders: to the Aborigines of our country, to the inhabitants of Mexico and South America, and of more distant countries.

In the United States, there are districts where no small portion of the people are without the Bible. In the bounds of a single county in the state of New York, containing a population of only 22,000, it was recently ascertained that 878 *families* were destitute of the Scriptures; and in another district of the same State, comprising 2507 families, there were found 441 destitute families, and 6813 destitute readers. In one of the counties in the state of New Jersey, several persons or families have been found, who had never seen a Bible, and knew not what kind of a book it was, nor the origin of the human race.

In Europe, a similar lack of the Holy Scriptures has been discovered, even in those parts where the light of the gospel has most abundantly shined. A document recently published by the committee of the Bible Society of Wigan, in Lancashire, England, states, that out of 797 houses in that town, which were visited for the purpose of ascertaining the wants of the Scriptures, 380 houses were found totally destitute *of a single copy of the Bible or Testament*.

On many millions in Mexico and South America, in Asia, and Africa, and the islands of the Sea, the light of divine truth has never shone. By great labor and expense must the Bible be translated into different languages, be printed in large editions, and circulated over widely-extended countries. Notwithstanding the numerous Bible Societies which have been formed in this and in other countries, of which men of the first rank, wealth, and influence are the patrons; notwithstanding the great number of Bibles and Testaments which have, within a few years, been circulated, of which the British and Foreign Bible Society alone has been the instrument of issuing 3,201,978 copies in 17 years, it has been estimated, that more than 600,000,000 of the human family are now ignorant of the revealed will of their Maker, and of the plan of salvation by a Redeemer; and, it is to be feared, that a great portion of them will live and die in the same wretched condition. It is ardently desired, that Bible Societies

may be formed in every section of our land; that the more wealthy societies, after supplying their own districts with the Word of Life, will contribute liberally to the funds of the Parent Society, to enable it to print the Scriptures in the various necessary languages, and circulate them in the more destitute places of our land; and that all will unite their efforts in giving the Bible to the whole inhabited world. In this best of all charities, the United States ought to act, and doubtless will act, a distinguished part. The object is of such a nature, so deeply affecting the present and future interests of the human family, that it cannot fail to receive the cordial support of every member of the Christian community.

